

ACTION –

Endorsement of Comments on the I-66 Inside the Beltway Multimodal Improvement Project (Dranesville, Mason and Providence Districts)

ISSUE:

Board endorsement of comments on the I-66 Inside the Beltway Multimodal Improvement Project.

RECOMMENDATION:

The County Executive recommends that the Board endorse the following comments on the I-66 Inside the Beltway Multimodal Improvement Project which are contained in a letter to Secretary of Transportation Aubrey Layne (Attachment I):

- The multimodal projects supported by the toll revenues should include transit operating costs;
- Addressing negative impacts on the adjacent and parallel roadway network should be high priorities for toll road revenues;
- The timing of widening I-66 Inside the Beltway should be flexible;
- Impacts on Washington Dulles International Airport traffic should be addressed; and
- Viable free options to using I-66 during the peak periods should be provided, particularly in the counter-flow direction.

TIMING:

The Board should act on this item on September 22, 2015, so that the Board's comments can be taken into account while the project is being developed.

BACKGROUND:

Governor McAuliffe is interested in proceeding with multimodal improvements, including High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes, on I-66 inside the Beltway. These improvements will include dynamically tolling I-66 inside the Beltway during peak periods in both directions, and using the proceeds for a package of multimodal improvements that will benefit the toll payers, including bus service, eight-car trains for Metrorail, bike and pedestrian facilities along the corridor, and eventually, widening selected portions of the

DRAFT Board Agenda Item  
September 22, 2015

Interstate between the Beltway and Fairfax Drive in Arlington. The project is scheduled to be implemented by 2017. Originally, it was proposed that only HOV-3 and higher vehicles be allowed to use the facility for free during the peak periods. However, the Secretary has agreed to allow HOV-2 and higher vehicles use I-66 Inside the Beltway for free initially.

The goals of the project include:

- Increasing person throughput in the corridor;
- Improving travel times;
- Reducing congestion;
- Increasing travel choices for Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) drivers and transit users; and
- Improving travel conditions on local roads

This policy will then transition HOV-3 and higher vehicles being free after the Express Lanes on I-66 outside the Beltway open in 2022 (current schedule).

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) staff briefed the Board on this project at the Board Transportation Committee meeting on January 20, 2015. Subsequently, Secretary of Transportation Aubrey Layne contacted Arlington Board Chairman Mary Hynes, Fairfax County Board Chairman Sharon Bulova and City of Falls Church Mayor David Tarter requesting assistance in identifying a partner agency in Northern Virginia to assist with the implementation of the multimodal improvement project and manage future revenues generated by the project. Since VDOT intends to implement the toll facility inside the Beltway without a private sector partner, a public sector partner is needed to receive and manage the revenues and facilitate the implementation of the multimodal improvements in the future. The governing bodies of the three jurisdictions requested that the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) serve as the regional partner agency for this project. (The Board of Supervisors acted on this request on March 3, 2015). The Secretary subsequently agreed with this request.

Since January 2015, County staff have been working with staffs from Arlington County, Falls Church, VDOT, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), and NVTC to pursuing various aspects of this project. One significant effort has been to develop a framework agreement to guide the process for managing the toll road revenues and selecting projects to be implemented with these revenues. The Board was briefed on this agreement on July 14, 2015, and asked that staff schedule time for the Board to discuss the project itself and consider comments on the project to send to the Secretary. This meeting was scheduled for September 11, 2015.

DRAFT Board Agenda Item  
September 22, 2015

At the same time, VDOT and DRPT staff and their consultant team have been working on several aspects of the project, including a traffic and revenue study that will estimate

the impacts of the I-66 Inside the Beltway Multimodal Project on the roadway network parallel and adjacent to I-66 inside the Beltway. This study was originally expected to be complete in mid-August 2015 which would have allowed County staff time to review it in detail prior to the September 11, 2015, meeting. Arlington County and Falls Church staff scheduled similar meetings with the governing bodies in early to mid-September. Unfortunately, VDOT's consultant is still working on this study, and staff from the three jurisdictions will not have time to adequately review it before these mid-September meetings. In addition, as of early September, the Commonwealth had not yet provided its version of a framework agreement to memorialize various aspects of the project for local government staffs to review. As a result, the schedule for various approvals associated with the project, including the framework agreement, has been delayed. A revised schedule of major milestone actions is included in this item as Attachment II.

Related to the project itself, there are several comments that County staff believes would be helpful to send to Secretary Layne, so that he is formally aware of Fairfax County's concerns as the project is being developed. County staff have been discussing these concerns with VDOT staff during frequent meetings on the project.

### **Multimodal Projects should Include Transit Operating Costs**

The list of multimodal projects that might be implemented with the toll road revenues includes a variety of capital and operating projects, such as intersection improvements on roadways near I-66; bus and Metrorail car purchases; transit operating support; and bike and pedestrian projects. There has been some uncertainty about whether or not transit operating expenses can be funded with the toll road revenues. Staff believes that providing support for transit operating costs is one of the most cost-effective ways to increase person throughput in the corridor and reduce congestion. As a result, transit operating costs should be considered for toll road revenues.

### **Addressing Impacts on the Adjacent and Parallel Roadway Network should be High Priorities**

There have been concerns about the impact of tolling I-66 on the adjacent and parallel roadway network. In some cases, the tolls might result in High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV-2) vehicles shifting away from I-66 to the adjacent roadway network in the future; however, the ability for Single Occupant Vehicles (SOVs) to pay to use the facility and increased transit service might also attract users to the facility. In the absence of the updated toll and revenue study information, staff recommends that addressing any

DRAFT Board Agenda Item  
September 22, 2015

negative impacts of tolling on the adjacent and parallel roadway network should be a high priority for the toll road revenues.

### **The Timing of Widening I-66 Inside the Beltway should be Flexible**

One of the projects to be considered for the use of the toll revenues is widening of I-66 inside the Beltway. The project submission for the Constrained Long Range Plan approved by the Transportation Planning Board for I-66 inside the Beltway includes this widening after other multimodal improvements have been implemented and their impacts have been assessed. Staff believes that the timeframe for this widening should remain flexible. If multimodal investments are made, and these investments do not relieve congestion on I-66 inside the Beltway, the widening of the roadway, particularly eastbound, should occur as soon as possible.

### **Impacts on Washington Dulles International Airport Traffic should be Addressed**

Currently, SOV traffic to and from Dulles Airport is allowed to use I-66 inside the Beltway even during the restricted HOV time periods. This policy has been important to ensuring reasonable access to the airport from Arlington, the District of Columbia and Maryland at all times. Unfortunately, the policy has also lead to a significant number of violators and difficulty enforcing HOV restrictions east of the Dulles Connector Road entrance to I-66. These factors have contributed to congestion on I-66 inside the Beltway. VDOT is proposing to toll all users of I-66 inside the Beltway, including those with origins and destinations at Dulles Airport, if they are not HOV-2 initially or HOV-3 in the future. While this change in policy should improve travel times to Dulles Airport during these peak periods for all users, VDOT should continue to work with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority to ensure that this change in policy does not discourage travelers from using Dulles Airport or discourage workers from taking jobs at Dulles Airport.

### **Viable Free Options to Using I-66 during the Peak Periods should be Provided, particularly in the Counter-flow Direction**

While I-66 inside the Beltway is currently restricted to HOV-2 and higher during the peak periods in the peak direction, there is no such restriction on travel in the opposite direction. Adding tolling in both directions will ensure 55 mile per hour speeds for HOV-2 and greater initially and HOV-3 in the future, and it will allow people who currently cannot use I-66 at these times to pay to use the facility. However, in the reverse direction, it will mean tolling SOV trips that are currently free. As a result of these new tolling requirements, parallel routes should be improved through techniques such as intersection improvements, enhanced signal timing, increased transit service and

DRAFT Board Agenda Item  
September 22, 2015

improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities to provide viable alternatives for SOVs who decide not to pay the toll.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

This action has no direct fiscal impact on Fairfax County. The toll road revenues collected on I-66 inside the Beltway will be used for multimodal improvement projects that benefit the toll payers. Some of these projects may be located in Fairfax County.

Additionally, these toll road revenues may fund additional bus service starting in Fairfax County.

ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS:

Attachment I: Letter to Secretary of Transportation Aubrey L. Layne, Jr., transmitting the Board's comments on the I-66 Inside the Beltway Multimodal Improvement Project

Attachment II: Draft Schedule for I-66 Inside the Beltway Activities

STAFF:

Robert A. Stalzer, Deputy County Executive

Tom Biesiadny, Director, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT)

Bob Kuhns, Transportation Planning Division, FCDOT

Karyn Moreland, Capital Projects and Traffic Operations Division, FCDOT

Todd Wigglesworth, Acting Chief, Coordination and Funding Division, FCDOT

Noelle Dominguez, Coordination and Funding Division, FCDOT

Malcolm Watson, Coordination and Funding Division, FCDOT

September 22, 2015

The Honorable Aubrey L. Layne, Jr.  
Secretary of Transportation  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
1111 East Broad Street, Room 3054  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Reference: Fairfax County Comments on the I-66 Inside the Beltway Multimodal  
Improvement Project

Dear Secretary Layne:

Thank you for your leadership in seeking improvements to I-66 inside the Beltway. As you know, this portion of I-66 is extremely congested in both directions during the morning and evening peak periods. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appreciates your willingness to pursue solutions to address this congestion.

While the Board has not taken a formal position on the project, on September 22, 2015, the Board endorsed the following concerns about the project:

- The multimodal projects supported by the toll revenues should include transit operating costs
- Addressing negative impacts on the adjacent and parallel roadway network should be high priorities for toll road revenues
- The timing of widening I-66 Inside the Beltway should be flexible
- Impacts on Washington Dulles International Airport traffic should be addressed, and
- Viable free options to using I-66 during the peak periods should be provided, particularly in the counter-flow direction.

These comments and concerns are discussed in more detail in the attachment to this letter. The Board wanted to formally transmit these concerns to you, so that they can be considered and addressed as you develop this project.

Thank you for your leadership in pursuing multimodal improvements to I-66 that will benefit the residents, businesses and visitors of the region. In addition, thank you for including us in the process of selecting the multimodal projects that will be supported with the toll road revenues. We appreciate your collaborative approach to this effort!

If you have any questions or need additional information, please call Tom Biesiadny, Director of Fairfax County's Department of Transportation at (703) 877-5663 or me at (703) 324-2321.

The Honorable Aubrey L. Layne, Jr.  
September 22, 2015  
Page Two

Sincerely,

Sharon Bulova  
Chairman

Cc: Nicholas Donohue, Deputy Secretary of Transportation  
Helen Cuervo, Administrator, Northern Virginia District, Virginia Department of  
Transportation  
Amanda Baxter, Project Manager, VDOT  
Members, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
Edward L. Long Jr., County Executive, Fairfax County  
Robert A. Stalzer, Deputy County Executive  
Catherine A. Chianese, Assistant County Executive

Fairfax County Comments about the I-66 Inside the Beltway Multimodal Improvement Project  
September 22, 2015

**Multimodal Projects should Include Transit Operating Costs**

The list of multimodal projects that might be implemented with the toll road revenues includes a variety of capital and operating projects, such as intersection improvements on roadways near I-66; bus and Metrorail car purchases; transit operating support; and bike and pedestrian projects. There has been some uncertainty about whether or not transit operating expenses can be funded with the toll road revenues. The Board believes that support for transit operating costs is one of the most cost-effective ways to increase person throughput in the corridor and reduce congestion. As a result, transit operating costs should be considered for toll road revenues.

**Addressing Impacts on the Adjacent and Parallel Roadway Network should be High Priorities to Toll Road Revenues**

There have been concerns about the impact of tolling I-66 on the adjacent and parallel roadway network. In some cases, the tolls might result in High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV-2) vehicles shifting away from I-66 to the adjacent roadway network; however, the ability for Single Occupant Vehicles (SOVs) to pay to use the facility and increased transit service might also attract users to the facility. In the absence of the updated toll and revenue study information, the Board of Supervisors is concerned that addressing any negative impacts of tolling on the adjacent and parallel roadway network should be a high priority for the toll road revenues.

**The Timing of Widening I-66 Inside the Beltway should be Flexible**

Toll revenues are being considered for the widening of I-66 inside the Beltway. The Constrained Long Range Plan project submission approved by the Transportation Planning Board for I-66 Inside the Beltway includes this widening after other multimodal improvements have been implemented and their impacts have been assessed. The Board believes that the timing of this widening should remain flexible. If multimodal investments are made, and these investments do not relieve congestion on I-66 inside the Beltway, the widening of the roadway, particularly eastbound, should occur as soon as possible.

**Impacts on Washington Dulles International Airport Traffic should be Addressed**

Currently, SOV traffic to and from Dulles Airport is allowed to use I-66 inside the Beltway even during the restricted HOV time periods. This policy has been important to ensuring reasonable access to the airport from Arlington, the District of Columbia and Maryland at all times. Unfortunately, the policy has also lead to a significant number of violators and difficulty enforcing HOV restrictions east of the Dulles Connector Road entrance to I-66. These factors have contributed to congestion on I-66 inside the Beltway. VDOT is proposing to toll all users of I-66 inside the Beltway, including those with origins and destinations at Dulles Airport, if they are not HOV-2 initially or HOV-3 in the future. While this change in policy should improve travel times to and from Dulles Airport during these peak periods for all users, VDOT should continue to work with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority to ensure that this change



in policy does not discourage travelers from using Dulles Airport or discourage workers from taking jobs at Dulles Airport.

**Viable Free Options to Using I-66 during the Peak Periods should be Provided, particularly in the Counter-flow Direction**

While I-66 inside the Beltway is currently restricted to HOV-2 and higher during the peak period in the peak direction, there is no such restriction on travel in the opposite direction. Adding tolling in both direction will ensure 55 mile per hour speeds for HOV-2 and greater initially and HOV-3 in the future, and it will allow people who currently cannot use I-66 at these times to pay to use the facility. However, in the reverse direction, it will mean tolling SOV trips that are currently free. As a result of these proposed new tolling requirements, parallel routes should be improved through techniques such as intersection improvements, enhanced signal timing, increased transit service and improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities to provide viable alternative for SOVs who decide not to pay the toll.

Draft Schedule for I-66 Inside the Beltway Activities  
September 22, 2015

- September 11, 2015: Board Transportation Committee Meeting; Briefing on I-66 Inside the Beltway Project
- September 15, 2015: Commonwealth Transportation Board Meeting; Briefing on I-66 Inside the Beltway Project
- October 5-7, 2015: VDOT Public Information Meetings on I-66 Inside the Beltway Project
- October 13, 2015: Board Transportation Committee; Update on I-66 Inside the Beltway Project; Staff Presentation on Toll and Revenue Study and Revised Framework Agreement
- November 17, 2015: Board Meeting; Board consideration of I-66 Inside the Beltway Project Endorsement and Framework Document
- December 2-3, 2015: Commonwealth Transportation Board; Consideration of I-66 Inside the Beltway Project and Framework Agreement
- December 3, 2015: Northern Virginia Transportation Commission Meeting; Consideration of I-66 Inside the Beltway Project and Framework Agreement